

REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-9 and 11-18. Claims 1, 8, 9 and 16-18 are amended herein. Claims 2 and 10 remain cancelled. No new matter is presented.

Support for the claim amendments can be found at least on page 17 line 22 through page 18 line 17; page 24 lines 3-8; page 25 line 9 through page 26 line 24; page 28 lines 2-8, page 42 line 23 through page 43 line 7; page 45 line 3 through page 46 line 10 and page 55 line 9 through page 56 line 23.

Thus, claims 1, 3-9 and 11-18 are pending and under consideration. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b):

Claims 1-3, 8-11 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,671,428 (Muranaga).

Muranaga discusses a collaborative document processing system with version and comment management. As indicated in col. 6 lines 58-62 of Muranaga, the system comprises a plurality of personal terminal devices, each assigned to each one of collaborating authors, and communication among the collaborating authors can be realized by sharing the comments attached to the document among all of the collaborating authors (see, col. 8 lines 28-34). In Muranaga, the document data stored in the document database 4 can be accessed from the personal terminal devices, such that the author can attach the comment to any desired comment at the document editor 141 and by using the comment editor 142 (see, col. 8 lines 18-22).

The document editor in Muranaga displays an older version of a currently processed document or comments attached by other authors based on correspondences among the documents, comments, and version data (see, col. 8, lines 4-11). When an author edits the document, the author can see the older version of the currently processed document or the comment attached by the other collaborating authors (see, col. 8, lines 12-17 and col. 17, lines 25-31).

As recited in claims 1, 8 and 9, displaying "a screen with an examination acceptance button for executing an examination acceptance process, and for displaying the examination document" at an examiner's side and "a screen with an examination request button for executing an examination request process" at the requester's side.

The invention also performs, "a request mail compiling process in which a request mail for requesting examination of the examination document is compiled" and the examiner's side includes "a screen for selecting an examination result reply process, and an approval process [that displays] an approval button for approving the examination document and a reject button for rejecting the examination document" (see claims 1, 8 and 9).

Independent claim 16 recites, "requesting examination of the examination document by the selected number of examiners." The claimed requesting includes "displaying a screen with an examination request button for executing an examination request process at a requester's side", "performing a request mail compiling process in which a request mail for requesting examination of the examination document is compiled" and "transmitting the request mail to the selected number of examiners."

Moreover, in contrast to Muranaga that only displays comments and version of the document, the claimed invention includes, "searching through the examination results collected" and "displaying the examination results on a screen in a searchable examination result list responsive to a request having an identifier defined by the requester prior to submission of said electronic document for examination" (see, claims 1, 8 and 9).

Muranaga fails to disclose or suggest "a screen with an examination acceptance button for executing an examination acceptance process" and "a screen with an examination request button for executing an examination request process", as recited in claims 1, 8 and 9 (see also, claim 16).

In Muranaga, the document data can be accessed from the personal terminal devices. As disclosed at col. 8 line 45 through col. 9 line 53, Muranaga discloses button icons such as, [Close], [Done], [Document] containing three commands of [Edit], [Save], and [Load], [Comment] containing four commands of [Attached], [Influenced], [Add], and [Delete], [Version] (see also, Figs. 7, 8A, and 8B). However, Muranaga fails to disclose or suggest the claimed "examination acceptance button", "examination request button", "approval button" and "reject button", because Muranaga does not perform the approval process.

On page 10 of the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that Muranaga does not explicitly disclose that the results are stored in a searchable list, but indicates based on the definition of a database at the time of the invention, it is inherent that the results that are stored in a database would be searchable because a database inherently provides searching capabilities. Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed feature for searching the results is

not inherent.

Muranaga does not teach or suggest each and every feature of the independent claims discussed above.

For at least the above mentioned reasons, the dependent claims are also patentable over Muranaga.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 4, 5-7, 12-15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of the following: Muranaga, IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin (IBM Bulletin) and U.S. Patent No. 6,725,426 (Pavlov).

Independent claims 17 and 18 recite that the examiner is provided with "a screen with an examination acceptance button for executing an examination acceptance process", "a screen for selecting an examination result reply process, and an approval process" and "an approval button for approving the examination document and a reject button for rejecting the examination document."

As discussed above, Muranaga is limited to uploading a document already being viewed by the collaborating author.

Further, as Pavlov merely discussed translating between a word processing document and an XML file, Pavlov does not cure the deficiencies of Muranaga regarding claims of the present application.

In particular, Pavlov converts the document to an XML file based on rules of a specified document type into XML (see, Fig. 6 and corresponding text and col. 1, line 42 through col. 2, lines 15).

On the other hand, the IBM Bulletin discusses electronic scheduling device reminding reviewers of electronic folders regarding due dates and due time (see, page 2) based on specifications set by an originator of the folder (see, page 6).

The cited references do not teach or suggest the above features including "a screen for executing an examination acceptance process", "a screen for selecting an examination result reply process, and an approval process" and "an approval button for approving the examination document and a reject button for rejecting the examination document", as recited in claims 17

and 18.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from the independent claims are patentably distinguishable over the cited references. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, claim 4 "checks the status of collection of the examination result, and urges for an examination to the examiner in charge before and after the preset collection period."

The cited references do not teach or suggest the claimed document examination apparatus and method including checking "the status of collection of the examination result, and urges for an examination to the examiner in charge before and after the preset collection period", as recited in claim 4.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

An early action to that effect is courteously solicited. If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 08/17/2007

By: 
Temnit Afework
Registration No. 58,202

1201 New York Ave, N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501